

In June 2010, Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) announced the introduction of her groundbreaking legislation, the Nonprofit Sector and Community Solutions Act (H.R. 5533). This bill is one of the first federal initiatives to address the nonprofit sector as a whole. It will take the first steps toward integrating the nonprofit sector into the federal policymaking process by establishing formal structures in Congress and federal administrative agencies focused on the success of nonprofits.

H.R. 5533 will create a bipartisan "United States Council on Nonprofit Organizations and Community Solutions," comprised of leaders from nonprofits, foundations, businesses, and all levels of government to identify high-priority issues and make formal recommendations to Congress and the Administration. The legislation will also establish the "Interagency Working Group on Nonprofit Organizations and the Federal Government" to improve policy coordination among agencies in their dealings with nonprofit organizations to enhance outcomes and accountability. Finally, the Nonprofit Sector and Community Solutions Act would assign the Department of Commerce the task of compiling data on nonprofits and develop metrics for performance, establish reporting requirements, and expand information so Congress can make well-informed policy decisions on nonprofit legislation.

According to Congresswoman McCollum, the bill is "a first step" and "the beginning of a positive conversation about the nonprofit sector in Washington, DC." She states the goals of this legislation are to build a stronger nonprofit sector, craft smarter federal policy and create more vibrant communities in every state.

We at Commongood Careers believe that this innovative bill recognizes as never before the vital role that nonprofit organizations play throughout our communities and our economy, as well as the potential for stronger partnerships between nonprofits and government agencies to further that important work. Demonstrating our support, the following is the transcript of a letter written by Commongood Careers' Founder and CEO James Weinberg, as published on Congresswoman's McCollum's website:

Dear Congresswoman McCollum:

I am writing to express my support for H.R. 5533, the Nonprofit Sector and Community Solutions Act of 2010. This innovative bill recognizes as never before the vital role that nonprofit organizations play throughout our communities and our economy, as well as the potential for stronger partnerships between nonprofits and government agencies to further that important work. By creating the U.S. Council and the Interagency Working Group, nonprofits will finally have representation within all aspects of the federal government.

By enhancing the relationship between the federal government and the nonprofit sector, significant gains can be made in policy development and evaluation mechanisms. While it is widely recognized that nonprofits provide a double bottom line to communities in terms of jobs created and services provided, conflicting policies exist that make it difficult for nonprofits to properly fulfill their missions and realize their potential. This legislation would allow the nonprofit sector to have a say in the formulation of these policies, and thereby help to grow the sector and strengthen the impact of its industry.

A portion of this bill in which I am particularly invested pertains to the impact of human capital development on the nonprofit sector. As the Founder & CEO of Commongood Careers and Talent Initiative, I have seen firsthand the challenge of underdeveloped nonprofit human capital systems. This bill offers the potential to address this challenge. Through a closer partnership between government and the nonprofit sector, we can learn from best practices in the sector and collaborate on developing, disseminating, and catalyzing investment in solutions.

I am committed to working with you and your office on this issue, and support the passage of this legislation. I believe that policies aiming to strengthen the relationship between the federal government and the nonprofit sector will have a positive impact on the lives of the American people.

Sincerely,

*James Weinberg
Founder & CEO*